

HAM (J. R.)

al

THE NECESSITY  
FOR A HOSPITAL  
IN DOVER, N. H.

READ BY

✓  
JOHN R. HAM, M. D.,

AT THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE

DOVER MEDICAL SOCIETY,

ON

FEBRUARY 3, 1892.



DOVER, N. H.:  
N. E. STILES' JOB PRINTING HOUSE.  
1892.

PRIVATELY PRINTED.

GENTLEMEN:—

It is well for us as men and physicians, and for the community in which we dwell, that this society has an existence. We have individual wants of a social and of a professional nature which are supplied by the unrestrained intercourse and exchange of thought of these monthly meetings; but we should not, and do not, meet for personal ends alone. We recognize the fact that we owe a debt of loyalty and service to the city in which we dwell. It is not only incumbent upon us that we obey the laws, that we live moral and upright lives, and perform cheerfully those duties which fall to the lot of all citizens, but we owe a peculiar service to our city by reason of our special training and learning in the science and art of medicine. Nor have we as citizens in the past been indifferent when improvements of a public nature have been discussed and pushed to a successful issue for the public good. We have given our voices and our pens, our time and our money, to our public buildings, our streets, street lighting, sewers, water supply, street railroad, library, stock associations for the building of dwellings for the middle classes, and for the erecting of shops for the enlargement of our manufacturing interests, for the abatement of taxes on local industries, for our park at Garrison Hill, for our schools and school buildings, for systematic vaccination and for our Board of Health.

These things are all needful and will demand our sympathy and watchful care, in common with all good citizens, for all the future; but I am impressed with the idea that Dover has another public want, which must be met mainly, and at the outset, by the united efforts of our society, or no other class of citizens will take the measures to supply it.

In my judgment Dover needs a City Hospital. We have at this time a population of 13,500, and at a railroad centre. We have a large class that is dependent upon their daily labor in our shoe shops and in our factories, who are not able to properly provide for themselves when sick and injured, from lack of means and lack of proper facilities in their homes and boarding places.

A hospital would afford relief to the class of people who would otherwise suffer from want of care.

Many clerks, servants and single people generally, are not conveniently situated in their usual places of abode, and have no systematic care and nursing, nor have they proper hygienic surroundings. They would seek the hospital for its light and air, for its cleanliness and care, and for its superior professional advantages.

A large number of people with both chronic and acute idiopathic diseases would of their own choice enter the hospital and pay for its privileges.

A large number of patients who live in the vicinity of the hospital, or even in the surrounding towns, who have diseases requiring surgical treatment, would prefer to enter the local hospital for operation and subsequent treatment where they could be near their kindred and friends, rather than be operated upon at their homes, or go to a hospital in a distant city.

The hospital would be ready at all times for the reception of those cases of accidents occurring suddenly to the employes



of the Railroads, Mills, and Factories, in which the injured person is a stranger having no local habitation or home, or in case he is unable to pay for lodging, nursing and surgical care, or in case a landlord or boarding-house keeper is unwilling to furnish the same.

I hope it may never again fall to my lot to be called to a railroad accident requiring amputation of a leg or thigh where I must run from hotel to hotel and from boarding house to boarding house for an hour or more in vain efforts to induce landlord or boarding-house keeper to take in the wounded man.

The mental strain of the surgical preparation, the hastily collecting of instruments, sponges, antiseptics, dressings, and the securing proper surgical assistance, is enough for the surgeon in charge of the case, without the additional worry of providing a place for the operation and subsequent treatment. Any of you who has done this, as I have on more than one occasion, will join me in praying to be relieved from another experience of the kind.

I would not be an alarmist, but I fear that something may occur that will tax our profession in this city to its utmost. May we not expect that an accident on the railroad between North Berwick and Newmarket, or between Rochester and Dover Point, will sometime occur? Think of Roslindale, of Revere, of Bradford, of Scarborough Bridge, and tell me, gentlemen of this society, should we be prepared were the same awful scenes to be re-enacted before our eyes, in our own vicinity?

Who should take the initiative in this matter? Who but the physicians of Dover, who are best able to appreciate the demands which suffering humanity may make at any moment upon the sympathy and hospitality of our city?

I plead for thought, discussion, and action in this matter, and we should begin at once. It may take a few years in which to raise the funds to purchase, or to build, and then to endow a hospital, and this should give us the incentive and the purpose to make a beginning now

I would have the members of the medical profession, and as many other leading men in Dover, form themselves into the Dover Hospital Association. I would have the association take the necessary steps to become incorporated under the laws of New Hampshire, choose officers, and at once set about the raising of funds for a hospital. We could contribute to it ourselves, and then we could secure contributions from our fellow citizens.

We could secure entertainments, readings, concerts, lectures, and should raise a good sum from an annual fair. And we could induce others to remember the Hospital in their last wills and testaments. I am sanguine that this society could appeal with success to this community. Once organize and set to work and money would flow in for this purpose.

The city of Dover would make annual donations from the city treasury of \$500 to \$1000, the B. & M. R. R. Co., the Cocheco Mfg Co., and Sawyers Mills would make an annual donation or endow beds available for their use in case of need; and employers, recognizing the value to themselves of such an institution in their neighborhood in cases of accident or serious sickness, would willingly pay in part or in full for the care of their employes.



